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**Inventory For
Manuscript Collection
MS-441**

Capt. William M. Hatch Journal
Inclusive dates: 1849-1896
Bulk dates: 1849-1850

by
Peter B. Dublin
(edited by Anastasia S. Weigle)
November 2012

Shelf feet: 0.25
Number of boxes: 1

Accession No. 2010.016

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Abstract

Hatch, William M., *Captain* (b.1801-d.1850)

Journal, 1849-1896 (Bulk dates: 1849-1850)

1 box (.25 linear feet)

Shipmaster of Bristol, Maine.

The collection consists of the journal kept by Capt. Hatch of the voyage of the schooner *Damariscove* from Damariscotta, ME to San Francisco between December 1849 and July 12, 1850. The collection also includes genealogical papers.

Donated by Nancy R. Martin.

MS-441, Accession No. 2010.016.

Finding aid available in repository, item level control.

Added entries—persons:

Hatch, William M., *Captain*

Talbot, George W., *Captain*

Added Entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Damariscove (Main topsail schooner)

Oreola (Schooner)

Winthrop (Bark)

Added entries—places:

Damariscotta (ME)

Newcastle (ME)

San Francisco (CA)

Cape Horn (ARG)

Added entries—key terms:

California—Gold Discoveries

Diaries

Sea stories, American

Seafaring life

Ship captains

Acquisition

The collection was donated to the Museum by Nancy R. Martin on May 17, 2010, accession no. 2010.016.

Provenance

A note in the journal dated July 28 1850 says that "Capt. Bearstows sister is going home soon and he thinks she will take this book." This must have happened after his arrival at San Francisco in July 1850. wife Nancy decided to move west and settled in Illinois with her younger daughter Marjorie Ellen.

Emeline, the eldest daughter (b.1829), stayed in Maine and married Charles Doolittle Sears (b.1824). The journal passed to her possession. Her husband Charles became the administrator of the Hatch Estate and they passed the journal on to their son, also named Charles Doolittle Sears.

Charles Doolittle Sears, Jr. passed the journal to Charles Benjamin Younger, son of Marjorie Ellen, daughter of Capt. Hatch, who moved west with her mother.

The donor, Nancy R. Martin, is the great-granddaughter of Capt. William M. Hatch and granddaughter of Marjorie Ellen. She acquired the journal from her father, Charles Benjamin Younger.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of these materials for study or research.

Physical Condition

The journal was professionally restored in 1981 at the Greenfield Bindery in Center Harbor, NH. The journal was de-acidified, conserved and rebound in half leather. The boards are covered with handmade paste papers. A drop front clamshell box covered in conservation green buckram cloth houses the journal. The entries are written in ink and are quite legible, although there is a fair amount of staining. If the journal was aboard the schooner *Damariscove* during the entire voyage, and then was carried overland from San Francisco to the Midwest, it is in quite good condition.

The journal is 6½" by 7¾" half-leather binding with hand-made paste paper cover. The entries are in ink on blue toned paper. There are 211 pages with a map attached following the last page. The page numbers were added in pencil at a later date.

It should be noted that Captain Hatch did not bother with punctuation and his spelling was somewhat idiosyncratic.

Included in the collection is a genealogy list of Hatch family names written by C. D. Sears. (possibly Charles Doolittle Sears, husband of Emeline, eldest daughter of Capt.

Hatch or their son of the same name). Attached to the list is an 1859 document stating that Mr. Francis Milliken and Mrs. Margaret Hatch of Boston (Capt. Hatch's daughter) were married at Saco on October 1859.

Historical Note

Gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, California on January 24, 1848. The news initially sparked streams of prospectors from California, Mexico, Oregon and Washington. The news spread across the country, but was not given great prominence by the press at first. The gold fever on the east coast was not sparked until President Polk's message to Congress, accompanied by a strong box filled with \$3000 in gold, on December 5, 1848. His message lent credibility to the story and the rush was on.¹ The New England states played a prominent role in the transportation of hopeful miners to California. "Maine invested heavily in maritime trade and commerce during the Gold Rush period, in fact ports in Maine provided nearly nine percent or sixty-seven vessels of the total number that sailed to California in 1849."²

There were several routes that a prospector could choose: overland, which was both physically arduous and dangerous; by sea around Cape Horn or through the Straits of Magellan; and by sea to Panama, overland across the Isthmus of Panama, and then by sea to California.

The schooner *Damariscove* was a two-mast topsail schooner. She was described in Certificate of Registry #334 issued at San Francisco having:

*"...one deck and two masts and that her length is sevent[sic] nine feet nine inches her breadth nineteen feet eight inches her depth eight feet that she measures one hundred two and 51/95 tons that she is a schooner has a square stern...and a billet head..."*³

On December 18, 1849, the *Damariscove* headed down the Damariscotta River, picked up passengers at Dyer's point (Cape Elizabeth?), and headed out to sea. Slightly less than seven months later, on July 12, 1850, she arrived at the port of San Francisco. Two members of the company listed in Hatch's Journal as members of the company are identified as passengers: Ephraim Hatch and Daniel Robinson.³ Since 22 men were far more than was needed normally to manage a vessel of this size, it must be presumed that most, if not all, of the company intended to try their luck in the gold fields or engage in various business activities.

The schooner *Damariscove* was subsequently used in coastal trading and went aground off the coast of Washington in 1854. Unfortunately, Capt. Hatch died in California in October 1850.

The topsail schooner *Damariscove* was a 102 ton schooner built in Newcastle, ME in 1849.⁴ It was built by Abner Stetson (1800-1878), a well-known vessel builder.⁵

Sources cited:

1. Lewis, O. (1949). *Sea routes to the gold fields*. (1st ed.). New York: A. A. Knopf, pg. 6.
2. Delgado, James. T. (1990) *To California by Sea: A Maritime History of the California Gold Rush*. (1990) Columbia, SC : University of South Carolina Press, pg. 23.
3. Rhea, Roxann F. and W. Randolph Stilson (2005). *Ship to Golden Shore: A Chronicle of the Schooner Damariscove, Her Men and Her "Afterlife" 1849-1854*. pp. 3, 5.
4. Goodman, John Barlett. (1992) *The Key to the Goodman Encyclopedia of the California Gold Rush Fleet* (1st ed.), Los Angeles : The Zamorano Club.
5. Biscoe, Mark Wyman (1994) *No Pluckier Set of Men Anywhere": The Story of Ships and Men in Damariscotta and Newcastle, Maine*. Lincoln, ME : Lincoln County Pub. Co., pg. 106.

Biographical Note

Capt. William M. Hatch, son of Capt. Phillips H. Hatch (1753-1848) and Fanny McCaffrey (1759-1828), was born January 10, 1801 in Bristol, Maine. However, online genealogical sites such as "Rootsweb" give his birth date as January 6, 1800 while another document—an application for Sons of the American Revolution—sets his birth date o January 16, 1801. An 1800 birth date is consistent with Hatch's notation in the journal that he was age 50, but we do not know if this list was written at the beginning or at the end of the voyage.

He married Nancy Laughton (born 1806) on March 6, 1828 and the couple had twelve children:

1. **Emeline B.** born 17 June 1829; married Charles Doolittle Sears; died 14 August 1870 at age 41.
2. **Margaret S.** born 27 June 1831; married Francis Milliken; died 21 June 1896 Portland, Maine, at age 64.
3. **Mariah** born April 7, 1833, died April 19, 1833.
4. **Nancy** born 16 March 1834; married John Hurtle.
5. **Miller** born 22 November 1835; died (Died at Sea).
6. **John** born 18 June 1838; died (Died at Sea).
7. **Reuben** born 10 February 1840; died (Died at Sea).
8. **Marjorie Ellin** born 29 April 1841; married Lewis Younger; died 3 January 1912 La Rose, Illinois, at age 70.
9. **Helen** born 1842, married husband unknown.
10. **Josiah** born 16 May 1842.
11. **Sarah** born 29 March 1844; married John Perkins 1862; married Samuel Wrightsman.
12. **Susan Jane** born 4 April 1846.

13. **Charles Sears** born 1 September 1848; died 13 April 1876 at age 27 (killed by a train in Canada).

There is very little known about Capt. Hatch's life and vessels he may have commanded before his trip aboard the schooner *Damariscove*. He did not command *Damariscove*. Capt. Hatch's health deteriorated during the voyage and six months after his arrival to San Francisco. He died in San Francisco. There are two different death months given for Capt. Hatch, October 1850 and December 1850. He is buried at the Old Harrington Church in Bristol.

Scope and Content

The journal contains Capt. Hatch's daily entries for the period of the voyage, December 18, 1849 through July 12, 1850. The daily entries comment on the weather, the condition of the vessel, the condition of the crew, and other items of interest to Capt. Hatch. In addition, Capt. Hatch provides a list with the names and ages of the crew, a list of ports visited with ratings of the harbors, and the longitude and latitude of key locations on the route. He included a sketch map of San Francisco Bay and Juan Fernandez Island. Any excerpts I have taken from the journal will be transcribed exactly as Capt. Hatch has written it with typos & grammatical errors included.

Of particular interest is the note he wrote on July 28, 1850 on page 3 of the journal. It appears to be addressed to a Mr. Sears:

"Mr. Weeks says that Capt. Bearstows sister is going home [back east?] soon & he thinks she will take this book together with his if she does i will send it to you & if you find any thing in it that you think exceptionable i hope you will take care of it & not expose it to the inspection of any one i want you to read it as soon as you can without interfering with your daily avocations you will at once see that the composition the spelling & the writing is verry imperfect but it has cost me much time and pains it has been written through tribulation and as soon as you have done with it I want you to give it to my wife"

Following tha text is the following instruction directed to his wife:

"Wife here is my Journal that I have taken pains to keep through the passage & i want you to read it & take good care of it don't let it go out of the house to any one and i don't want you to let any one read it that you think will make gamot of it i have nothing against friends reading it you know as well as i do i suppose who they are"

On pages 4 and 5 is a letter he wrote to his wife. It is interesting that he intentionally left several blank pages at the beginning to the journal for this purpose.

“Mrs Hatch i have written you three letters since I left home one from St. Catherines two from this place [San Francisco] since i have been here before the one i have just finished this then makes five in all what i want to say now is this the first draft that is sent home by any one of this concern i will send you some money whether it is much or little and more than this want you to see that neither you or the family suffers for the necessarys of life i feel my responsibility to you every day & if my life & health are spared i have no scruples as to my doing something here for you i will now ___ for a little more information to forward to you day That i have had a good many bouts with the Old pipe since i left home i think i can dispense with it altogether i assure you i have always felt Better if you please try it is not so much self denial after all only to think of being a Bond Slave for life to a nasty filthy pipe you may depend it will not only be for your health but it will restore the looks of youth to your cheeks think of that some one here told me to day that my face began to look as fair as a Boys but if it is likely to injure your health as you have been long accustomed to it i will not insist if you can if you please make the trial and then you can see for your self if it hurts you smoke one i have given you a sketch of the Port and the Bay of San Francisco i took but little pains you have a little of the out lines of Juan Fernandes such as it is & also of Cape Horn the most extreme Cape of the Southern part of the American continent Let Samuel Leighton read this Book if he wishes or any other of my old friends i have not Mentioned Essme or Margaret yet but it is not Because i have for gotten them for i love them Both & i hope the best of heavens helping may attend them both Margarets Picture hangs up in the cabin it has some admirers they call it pretty i have written a good deal but it looks to me as if it was mostly nonsense so good By for this time Wm M Hatch”

The only other item in the collection is a list of Hatch family names with birth and death dates written by C. G. Sears. I am making the assumption that this is Charles Doolittle Sears, Jr. The information may have been recorded by husband of Emeline (Charles Doolittle Sears) or their son who had the same name. The exact date of the document is unknown. However, a death date for Margaret S. Milliken is listed as June 12, 1896 so I know the document was written sometime on or after this date which extends the inclusive date of this collection to 1896.

Attached to the list is a small signed proof of a marriage document. This was transcribed by C. D. Sears:

“Francis Milliken and Miss. Margaret S. Hatch of Boston Mass was joined in Marriage at Saco Maine by me the Eleventh day of October AD 1859. Ephriam Harmon Justice of the Peace”

MS-441 Capt. William M. Hatch Journal Finding Aid

Box# Folder#

- 1 1 Journal kept by Capt. William M. Hatch
Passage from Damariscotta to San Francisco.
Dec. 18, 1849 to July 12, 1850
Main topsail schooner *Damariscove*, George W. Talbot, shipmaster
- 2 Hatch family birth, marriages and deaths

Appendix A: The Ship's Company

The following list is taken from Capt. Hatch's journal

** Initial owners of the schooner*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>
Thomas Hall	52
George Talbot	38
Francis Choate	43
George B. Williams	40*
William Keniston	43*
Daniel Mellus [Mellen]	37*
Joseph Mellus [Mellen]	43
S[amuel] W. Look	40*
William Fullerton	39*
Charles Berry	30
Reuben Ball	28*
William Curtis	43
Henry Hitchcock	23*
Joseph Hitchcock	21
Daniel Robinson	22
Richard Hiscock	36*
John Little	34
Alex Weeks	23
Matthew Tuck	29
Lyman Chapman	24
Ephraim Hatch	38
William M. Hatch	50*

NOTE: Eleven members of the company were part owners of the vessel for the period of the voyage. Other owners at this time included Abner Stetson (the builder) and Waterman Stetson. Together these men formed the Damariscotta Mining and Trading Company. Rhea and Stilson provide both a list of the owners and a table listing the

company, their ages, station on board, occupations, and residence. (Rhea and Stilson, 2005, p.3.)

Rhea and Stilson also assert that Capt. William M. Hatch was not the Master of the vessel for the voyage. In Table 1, the list created by Rhea and Stilson, identify George W. Talbot as the captain. That assertion was partly based on a comment by George Wharton Rice to the effect that “The schooner was commanded by Captain Talbot, and his mates ranked in order named were Thomas Hall, Charles Berry and William Curtis.” (The Shipping Days of Old Boothbay 1773-1917, p.84.) From some of the comments in this journal, it is clear that William M. Hatch is not in command of Damariscove, although we believe him to have commanded other vessels at earlier times.

